• 105

Identification

The Tanala (Antanala), including the Menabe and Ikongo sub-tribes have a population of about 170, 000 (1951). With them are tentatively grouped the ill-described Bezanozano (Antaiva, Antanka, Tankay) to the N, with a population of 25, 000. Both tribes speak Malayo-Polynesian languages of the Eastern Malagasy division.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, without terraces or use of manure. The staple crop is rice, especially wet rice grown on swampy ground. Next in importance is maize, then beans (6 varieties), then manioc. Of subsidiary consequence are bananas, sweet potatoes, and sugarcane. Cattle (of zebu type) are important but not particularly numerous; milk is used infrequently, butter and cheese are not made, and meat is used only at ceremonial sacrifices; cattle are grazed by day, penned at night. Other domestic animals are goats (fewer than cattle), pigs, dogs (used for hunting, not food), and chickens; introduced during the historical period are sheep, cats, ducks (eggs eaten), geese, and turkeys. Fishing is important; it is done both on the rivers and at sea; spears, hooks, gorges, dip nets, seines, traps, and decoys are used. Bees are kept. Hunting (for wild boars and lemurs) and gathering are unimportant, and there is little trade.

Sex Division of Labor

Men and boys herd, milk (inferentially), hunt, clear land, and do most of the fishing. Both sexes cultivate dry rice, but women do more work than men in the gardens and wet-rice plots.

Property

Houses and movable property are individually owned. Land is owned collectively by villages, within which each lineage has a segment. Dry-rice fields are held by families, formerly for one year. There is a tendency toward private property in wet-rice fields.

Inheritance is patrilineal--by children of both sexes but only by sons in the case of cattle and land. A man's property is divided approximately equally among his wives, with the chief wife receiving rather more than the rest, and the share received by each wife is divided among her children (sons for land and cattle). If there are no siblings, the estate is divided among siblings by the same Mo; if none, by the children of brothers.

•105

Social Stratification

There are three social classes:

(1) nobles, the clansmen of chiefs, called Hova by the Ikongo, Andriana by the Menabe.
(2) commoners, called Vahoaka by the Ikongo, Hova by the Menabe.
(3) slaves (Ndevo), a hereditary status, descendants of war captives.

The Menabe have had a noble class for only about 125 years (Linton). Marriage is permitted between nobles and commoners (children taking father's rank among Ikongo, mother's among Menabe) and between commoners and slaves (children are free).

Marriage

Marriage involves a small, almost negligible bride-price, really only a payment for children.

Polygyny is general. The first wife is chief wife, but each wife has her own house, the husband rotating. Two-thirds of the Menabe men are monogamous, fewer among the Ikongo. Sororal polygyny is permitted but somewhat disapproved and rare. The sororate and levirate are permitted; the latter is common among the Ikongo, rare among the Menabe.

Family

There are large patrilocal extended families. Sons usually, but not always, remain together after the death of the father.

Residence

Residence is patrilocal, sons building houses near those of their father. Among the Menabe a poor man sometimes resides with his wife's family, if the latter is rich and insists (and his children belong to her sib), but this is considered disgraceful and is relatively rare.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

Local exogamy prevails among the Ikongo, also today among the Menabe, but the latter formerly preferred local endogamy.

Marriage is forbidden with any primary or secondary consanguineal relative and with MoSiDa or any traceable matrilineal kinsmen. Marriage with FaBrDa is forbidden by Ikongo, disapproved by Menabe (allowed with a ban-breaking ceremony). Cross-cousin marriage is preferred among the Menabe, forbidden among the Ikongo.

There are patrilineal sibs, divided into exogamous patri-lineages. Sib exogamy is theoretically the norm, but is allowed with a fine and is in fact definitely favored, at least by the Menabe.

Kinship Terminology

Fa--baba. Ch--zanakay. Hu, Wi--vady. Br--rahalahy (m.s.), analahy (w.s.). Si--anakavy (m.s.), rahavavy (w.s.). Wi--reny? Generation terms for nepotic relatives, descriptive for avuncular. Iroquois terms for cross-cousins of opposite sex.

Settlement Pattern

The Tanala live in stockaded villages, each with a village square. Houses are rectangular with gable roofs and have their floors raised 18-24 inches above the ground. Walls are of bamboo, mats, or rushes. Roofs are thatched.

Community Organization

A village is founded by one lineage, after which others form by fission. Normally a village is divided into 2-10 wards, each the property of a lineage, the village being a clan-community, the ward a clan-barrio. An average village has 50-80 families.

Local Government

Each village has an elective headman (usually not a noble) and a council of patri-family heads.

State

Villages (1 to 50) are politically integrated into sub-tribes, each under a paramount chief. The Ikongo have one "king." The Menabe had no paramount chiefs until 100 years ago, when a state on the Merina model was established.

Bibliography

Linton, R. The Tanala. Field Museum of Natural History Anthropological Series, XXII, 1-334. 1933.